

What is Claimed is:

1. A method for facilitating communications amongst a plurality of mobile units in a network, comprising:

establishing a plurality of underlay communication cells;

positioning at least two of the plurality of mobile units in at least one of the underlay communication cells, the units being capable of communications via the underlay communication cells;

establishing an overlay communication cell, the overlay communication cell covering the same area as at least the underlay cells that comprise the at least two of the plurality of mobile units;

establishing an association between underlay cells that comprise the at least two mobile units and the overlay communication cell; and

establishing a group communication call between the at least two mobile units using the overlay cell.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein establishing a group communication call comprises the plurality of mobile units listening for a page.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein establishing a group communication call further comprises the at least two mobile units determining whether to return the page to the overlay cell and when to return the page to the underlay cell.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein establishing a group communication call further comprises the at least two mobile units returning the page only to the overlay cell.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein establishing a group communication call further comprises the at least two mobile units returning the page only to the underlay cell.

6. The method of claim 2 wherein establishing a group communication call further comprises the at least two mobile units not returning the page.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising activating an overlay in the absence of receiving a page.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein establishing a group communication call further comprises storing information at underlay cells identifying a control channel at the overlay cell.

9. A method of establishing a group communication call between mobile units comprising:

receiving a setup request message from an originator mobile unit, the setup request message comprising information indicating at least one destination mobile unit with which to establish a group call;

sending a group call request to the at least one destination mobile unit to request that the at least one destination mobile unit join the group call;

determining an overlay cell for the at least one destination mobile unit to use for the group call; and

establishing an audio path between the originator mobile unit and the at least one destination mobile unit within the overlay cell.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein establishing the audio path further comprises the at least one destination mobile unit listening for a page.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein establishing the audio path further comprises the at least one destination mobile unit determining whether to return a page to the overlay cell and when to return the page to an underlay cell.

12. The method of claim 10 wherein establishing the audio path further comprises the at least one destination mobile unit returning a page only to the overlay cell.

13. The method of claim 10 wherein establishing the audio path further comprises the at least one destination mobile unit not returning a page.

14. The method of claim 9 wherein establishing the audio path further comprises storing information at underlay cells identifying a control channel at the overlay cell.

15. A network comprising:  
a plurality of underlay communication cells;  
a plurality of mobile units, at least two of the plurality of mobile units being in different ones of the plurality of underlay communication cells;  
an overlay communication cell, the overlay communication cell comprising at least the respective underlay cells of the at least two mobile units;  
wherein the each of the underlay cells comprises a pointer address to the overlay cell;  
and  
a controller communicatively coupled to the underlay cells and the overlay cell, the controller establishing a group communication call between the at least two mobile units by using the pointer address.

16. The network of claim 15 wherein the controller further comprises means for sending pages to the mobile units and listening for return pages.

17. The network of claim 16 wherein the controller further comprises means for allowing the mobile unit to return a page using at least one of the overlay cell and one of the underlay cells.

18. The network of claim 16 wherein the controller further comprises means for allowing the mobile unit to return a page on the overlay cell.

19. The network of claim 16 wherein the controller further comprises means for storing address information for responding to a page.

20. A network controller device comprising:
- a register storing a group call request message, the message comprising identification of at least one mobile unit to be included in the group call;
  - a processor that is coupled to the register, the processor forming and routing a page to the at least one mobile unit;
  - a page receipt register storing a page response received responsively from the page, the page response comprising an identity of an overlay cell;
  - such that the processor establishes a group call with the at least one mobile unit using the overlay cell identified in the page response..
21. The network of claim 20 wherein the processor comprises means for listening for a page.